



GENEVA CONFERENCE ON
AFGHANISTAN
27 - 28 November 2018



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

BRIEF BACKGROUND

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals

In September 2015 Heads of State and Government agreed to set the world on a path towards sustainable development through the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). 169 targets and 232 indicators accompany the 17 goals and set out quantitative and qualitative objectives across the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development for the next 15 years (2015-2030).

The goals provide a framework for shared action “for people, planet and prosperity,” to be implemented by “all countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership.” As articulated in the 2030 Agenda, “never before have world leaders pledged common action and endeavor across such a broad and universal policy agenda. These targets are “global in nature and universally applicable, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.”

Afghanistan as an active member of the United Nations, committed itself towards SDGs attainment till 2030. In this context, and with the Council of Minister’s decision on 7th October 2015, the Ministry of Economy has been designated as the lead ministry and focal point for SDGs and assigned to take lead in coordinating, planning, monitoring and reporting SDGs for Afghanistan.

Afghanistan with A-SDGs Vision

By 2030, Afghanistan will become (1) a country with a democratic political system based on Islamic principles and the Constitution, boasting both internal peace and security as well as peaceful relations with neighboring countries, and commanding respect on the international stage. (2) A tolerant, unified and diverse nation that upholds Islamic heritage, and promotes public participation and equality of all citizens. (3) A self-

sustaining community, full of hope and prosperity, with a developed job-creating economy, an active private sector, and sustainable environmental protection.

Considering Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals (A-SDGs), necessary institutional, regulatory and incentive framework has been established to adopt and achieve SDGs by 2030.

To advance progress towards the SDGs, the GIRoA has taken the following steps: (1) Nationalization of SDGs; (2) Alignment of SDGs with ANPDF, NPPs and all other development projects; (3) Pricing and consolidation of necessary financial resources from different sources; and (4) Creation of the Executive Committee on SDGs, a comprehensive monitoring and reporting mechanism on the national level, housed under the Chief Executive Office of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Executive Committee on Sustainable Development Goals

The Executive Committee on Sustainable Development Goals is established to oversee the overall coordination to attain the SDGs within the overall guidance of Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF), New Deal implementation plan and national priority programs.

Executive Committee also provides a high-level platform for direct and sustained engagement between the various government stakeholders, the private sector, civil society organizations and the international community.

To facilitate the coordination of activities under the committee, four technical working groups have been established to mainstream the coordination process within the Executive Committee on Sustainable Development Goals. The technical groups have been designed so that related topics, that are associated to the budgetary sectors, can be discussed within an umbrella of working groups. Therefore, the four technical working groups respectively focus on:

1. **Working Group One:** Security and Governance
2. **Working Group Two:** Agriculture and Rural Development
3. **Working Group Three:** Health, Education and Social Protection
4. **Working Group Four:** Economic Growth and Infrastructure

This Executive Committee is composed of 37 permanent members, 29 government agencies and 8 civil society organizations, as well as private sector and development partners. The Minister of Economy, the Senior Economic and Development Affairs Advisor to the Chief Executive Office and the head of the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP) in Afghanistan serve as the three Co-Chairs for the . The committee is divided into four working groups: (1) Governance and Security, (2) Agriculture and Rural Development, (3) Health, Education and Social Protection, (4) Infrastructure and Economic Growth. To finalize the A-SDGs, the Executive Committee conducted 25 high-level meetings and the working groups conducted over 70 technical meetings.

As part of the nationalization of the SDGs, the working groups organized all goals, targets and indicators into a framework that aligns with budgetary sectors.

SDGs Nationalization

All member states of the United Nations are committed to fighting poverty, hunger, inequality and injustice. By 2030, we hope to achieve a prosperous, peaceful, capable, universal and economically-empowered society. Afghanistan is committed to incorporating and aligning the SDGs with its national development programmes, including the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF), National Priority Programmes (NPPs), and the Self Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF).

To begin nationalizing the SDGs, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) conducted a comprehensive consultation process to develop targets and indicators, taking into account the country's specific context and circumstances. This process included a diverse group of stakeholders, including governmental agencies, civil society, private sector, academia, international development partners, Kabul-based UN agencies, women and youth.

The outcome of this process was Afghanistan adopted 16 of the 17 SDGs, 112 of the 169 targets, and 178 of the 232 indicators. In addition, the working group divided all goals, targets and indicators into eight budgetary sectors. Afghanistan's national SDG document, as well as the ANPDF and other national and sectoral strategic documents, are based on these eight sectors. With these efforts the Government of Afghanistan has developed A-SDGs National Document and A-SDGs Alignment Framework which were endorsed by the Councils of Ministers.

Moreover, the Government of Afghanistan conducted a Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) to compare all of the country's strategic documents, such as the ANPDF, National Priority Programmes (NPPs), and the Self Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF), to the SDGs. According to the RIA, there is 75 percent alignment between these national strategic documents and the SDGs, though there are some gaps.

Most countries have developed mid-term and long-term plans for effective implementation of the SDGs. In developing these, Afghanistan aligned its targets and indicators for 2020 with the ANPDF and NPPs. At the same time, the country is in the process of designing a comprehensive development plan for 2020-2030.

Process Involved

- Coordination of SDGs nationalization process with Line Ministries, budgetary unit's and development partners.
- Data collection, analysis and data validity of nationalized SDGs targets and indicators.
- Consulting various segments of society, including, youth, civil society, academia and media on public awareness campaigns on SDGs nationalization process.
- Developing SDGs monitoring system.
- Alignment of A-SDGs' targets and indicators with national policies, strategies and development plans.
- Organization of 17 goals into 8-socio-economic sectors to simplify planning and implementation process for the respective line ministries and agencies.
- Partnership with development partners, private sector, civil society organizations, international communities, academia, media and all relevant stakeholders.

Afghanistan SDGs Implementation

The Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals (A-SDGs) are planned to be implemented in three phases. The nationalization phase, alignment/localization phase and implementation phase.

The global sustainable development goals, targets and indicators had to undergo a process of consultations with relevant stakeholders, technical reviews to adopt the targets and indicators that are relevant and applicable to Afghanistan. As a result, a set of targets and indicators has been developed and known as the nationalized Afghanistan goals, targets and indicators. This process of nationalization of targets and indicators is the first and beginning phase of the SDGs implementation in Afghanistan. During this phase the Government of Afghanistan adopted 16 of the 17 SDGs, 112 of the 169 targets, and 178 of the 232 indicators.

These A-SDGs targets and indicators were aligned with the national policies and plans of the line ministries which fall under the National Priority Programs and Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework respectively. This alignment phase was the second phase of SDGs implementation.

The last and longest phase is the implementation phase which, the country is in the process of designing a comprehensive development plan for 2021-2030.

Stakeholders Engagement and Awareness Raising

Afghanistan believe that civil society organizations, private sector entities, academia, media, youth, students, women, national and international NGOs, UN agencies and development partners have vital role in nationalization, alignment, implementation and monitoring of A-SDGs.

The A-SDGs Secretariat at the MoEc, engaged all national and international stakeholders in the nationalization process of the SDGs targets and indicators. The GoIRA supports funding modalities that foster stronger collaboration among civil society, academia, youths, gender entities, private sector, development partners, UN agencies and other relevant institutions. More than 65 workshops, seminars, symposiums and conferences have been organized for stakeholders and public awareness, the few examples are as followings.

Many workshops and consultation meetings have been organized by MoEc to enhance awareness about the SDGs in Afghanistan. Ministry of Economy has organized and supported multiple workshops with all sectors of the society (e.g. students, youth, civil society, private sector, economic directors of 34 provinces and with plan and policy directors of all government line budgetary entities.

Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals (S-SDGs) website is developed and launched which can be accessed at www.sdgs.gov.af. As everyone is engaged with the social media and it's a very good way raise awareness about the A-SDGs, a Facebook account for A-SDGs developed and made available for public review; and it being updated regularly with every progress made toward A-SDGs in the country.

Challenges Ahead

- **Conflict and Insecurity:** Development is correctly linked with peace and stability in the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework. This fact restrains Afghanistan from effectively addressing hunger as an SDG. How Afghanistan can achieve peace remains a challenge, given the current political situation.
- **Financing the SDGs:** Attaining SDGs will require substantial financial and technical resources, given Afghanistan's financial instability and dependency to the international community, innovative funding mechanisms will be required to achieve the SDGs.

- **Realistic and accurate data for setting baselines and annual targets for indicators:** There are some technical capacity gaps and a deficit of relevant experience in sectoral agencies to set baselines and annual targets for the indicators. Establishing and implementing the process for defining baselines and targets will require an enormous effort. The high number of indicators and the need for baseline surveys to be conducted by experts will require plenty of time, a secure environment, and a huge amount of funding.
- **Technical Capacity and Technology:** Required technical and professional capacity for SDGs implementation is not in place. Further to that, technology is a vital tool for attainment of SDGs in all developed and developing countries, but here, we have no technology and its skills to apply in SDGs achievement.
- **Climate Change:** Climate change will negatively affect Afghanistan from achieving A-SDGs. Water sources are entirely dependent on climate. The question is whether Afghanistan has the human and financial capacity to avert the negative impacts of climate change, particularly if those measures have cross borders implications;
- **Slow Economic Growth:** The complex issues that are involved in economic growth rates are beyond the scope of focused SDG targets and indicators. Unemployment, low income, limited sustainable agricultural opportunities, harsh climates closing districts during the winter cause extreme poverty in the country.

Way forward

The Government of Afghanistan will be using realistic approaches, and by drawing on all available resources, will incorporate the SDGs into the country's economic and social agendas, and will implement strategic action plans to achieve national targets. Through the tireless efforts, Afghanistan will provide a strong foundation for achieving Afghanistan's SDGs, balancing development and growth in order to accelerate economic development.